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Media Contact:
Brian Blackford
Communications and Outreach Director
Indiana Office of Tourism Development
bblackford@VisitIndiana.com
(317) 232-8881

Indiana Tourism Summit provides tools to navigate economy

Event geared toward local tourism offices, organizations and attractions

INDIANAPOLIS – The Indiana Office of Tourism Development, in conjunction with the Indiana Tourism Council, will host its annual statewide Tourism Summit on Thursday, September 16, at the Renaissance Indianapolis North Hotel in Carmel. This year's Summit focuses on successfully developing product and reaching consumers in a post-recession economy. Renowned tourism and business experts, Bill Geist (in person) and Rebecca Ryan (via webcast), will present.

"The tourism industry is well-positioned to help Indiana emerge from the economic slowdown," said Lt. Governor Becky Skillman. "This is a great opportunity to arm our partners with information and ideas so they can remain proactive, maximize limited resources and positively impact Hoosiers."

Bill Geist will provide an in-depth analysis of the current state of the tourism industry and discuss consumer trends. Rebecca Ryan will showcase how tourism officials and business leaders can navigate uncertain times to emerge even stronger.

Challenges remain, but the peak summer travel season brought increased attendance for many Indiana tourism businesses. The Fort Wayne TinCaps say attendance at Parkview Field in 2010 was up seven percent over last year. More than 400,000 fans attended a game, setting a franchise record. Likewise, the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra announced a record-breaking year for its summer outdoor concert series. Marsh Symphony on the Prairie at Conner Prairie drew 113,895 visitors this year, nearly 7,000 more than 2009.

Geist is president at Zeitgeist Consulting, a firm specializing in strategic planning, governance, marketing and legislative issues for convention and visitors bureaus, tourism-focused chambers of commerce, economic development organizations and communities.

Ryan, who founded Next Generation Consulting, is an expert at identifying trends and engaging the next generation. Her 2007 book, "Live First, Work Second: Getting Inside the Minds of the Next Generation" summarizes the firm's extensive research.

Indiana welcomes more than 62 million visitors each year, generating more than \$10 billion in visitor spending statewide.

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Lt. Governor Becky Skillman oversees the Indiana Office of Tourism Development. Amy Vaughan serves as the agency's Director.